

## Writing Output Measures

“Output Measures” or “results based evaluation” refer to the impact a project had on a community, or the change that came about as a result of the project. There are several aspects of “output measures.” One way to get at the impact is to track use or percent change of some aspect of the project. Examples are included below. Stating that a library or system purchased 50 new job resources is not an outcome. A list of five things the system will do, such as survey libraries, order equipment, deliver equipment, install equipment, and give libraries promotional items, if requested, does not get at outcomes.

Measuring use of new materials is fairly straight forward if the library has an automated circulation system or a subscription service automatically provides use reports. Measuring use of new equipment does not have to involve tracking every single use, and in many cases that is not even possible. It’s fine to track use over a given, limited, time frame to gather sample data. Or to ask librarians to estimate by observation if equipment is used daily, weekly, or monthly.

LSTA project applications should include appropriate quantitative measurement technique, preferably an estimate or target figure will be included to measure success. The process used to gather data should be described in the application to assure it is workable and practical.

Another way to get at the outcome of a project is to state what people will do as a result of the project, and often that is supported with quantitative data. See examples below.

“Stories” are one of the most powerful ways to get at the impact a project has had. This is especially true of Special Needs projects. For example, counting every person who uses a workstation with adaptive equipment doesn’t give any useful data, because most of the people would use the station regardless of the adaptive technology, or in spite of it. But if someone who has a vision impairment or a senior citizen comments on how much they appreciate having the large print keyboard, or a trackball instead of a mouse, it demonstrates exactly why the equipment was installed as part of a Special Needs project.

## Examples of Ways to Write Quantitative Output Measures

### Examples From Indianhead’s 2010 Jobs Project

Anticipate at least 100 referrals from Job Centers and Job Service. These agencies will be surveyed to get at the number of referrals made.

- Electronically track use of LearningExpress and summarize monthly, anticipate 150 uses each month.
- 25 libraries will host at least one program that addresses people affected by the economic downturn, and will be surveyed on their activities at the end of the project year.
- Track the number of hits for the System’s Jobs web site, anticipate 100 hits per month
- Anticipate at least 20 participants in the staff training webinar on how to use LearningExpress and have 80% plan to use it with their patrons.
- 30 libraries will have at least one idea of an inexpensive program they can host for people who are looking for jobs and a postcard will be sent to follow up.

### Examples from South Central’s 2010 JOBS Project

- Three staff workshops with a total attendance of at least 70 librarians.
- Recorded on-line training sessions will be viewed at least 30 times during 2010.
- 20 training sessions will be offered for the public at 20 locations, with an anticipated total attendance of at least 300 job seekers.
- The tutorial mode of LearningExpress will be accessed at least 1000 times before the end of 2010.

### **Examples from Southwest's 2010 JOBS Project**

- Training session evaluations will indicate 25% of participants will feel they have gained skills.
- 50% of libraries will report more use of library computers by class participants or people using computers to look for employment or to practice basic computer skills

### **Example from Burlington's 2010 Literacy Project**

- Will track use of computers by children and Hispanic families, want 5 uses a day.
- Will track which programs are used, want 107 software packages used at least 1 time in grant period
- Want 200 children to return a flier in exchange for an incentive item.
- Will survey day care and Headstart staff for satisfaction level, anticipate a 90% satisfaction level.

### **Example from Kenosha's 2010 Literacy Project**

- 75 parents will attend the two parenting workshops.
- 30 teen parents will participate
- 35 Hispanic parents will participate
- 500 families will visit the Ready to Read Centers and complete a survey
- 80% of the materials purchased will circulate at least twice
- Participating partners will survey at least 20 of their clients.

### **Example from Wisconsin Valley's 2010 Accessibility Project**

Wisconsin Valley used a survey at the end of the project to gather the raw data and then reported this summary.

- 56% of keyboards were used daily or weekly
- 67% of the wheeled walkers were used weekly or monthly
- 75% of magnifiers were used weekly or monthly
- 100% of trackballs were used weekly
- 100% of the screen enlarging software was used at least monthly
- The "reachers" were the least used adaptive equipment, with 33% used weekly.

## **Example of Ways to Write Qualitative Output Measures**

### **General Outcome Example from Waukesha's 2010 JOBS Project**

Waukesha County residents will have the opportunity to attend programs on job-seeking related topics...in a convenient location and time, at their participating local library. This will raise awareness among county residents of the available materials, resources and services at public libraries, Workforce Development Center, and WCTC Small Business Center, related to job and employment topics.

This qualitative output goal is supported with quantitative data. Waukesha is tracking attendance at their public training sessions, having attendees complete an evaluation, and tracking uses of employment resources like LearningExpress.

### **General Outcome Example from South Central's 2010 Accessibility Project**

These technologies, programs and services will continue to help adults with special needs use library computers and resources and will bring new patrons into the library after the grant year ends.

The System has asked participating libraries to survey users of equipment and partnering agencies as to how useful the equipment is in meeting needs.

## **Examples of How Stories Can Serve as a Qualitative Measurement**

### **Example from Indianhead's 2009 Accessibility Project**

**Pepin**--The very first day we were open after the electronic door installation, a lady with MS who uses her scooter happened to come in. She knew the electronic doors were coming and was anticipating their arrival. She said that they make it so much easier for her to enter on her own. She also said the library is one of the few places she can actually get into in the entire village, other than her apartment.

### **Example from OWLS' 2009 Accessibility Project**

**Kimberly-Little Chute**—An elderly gentleman came up to the desk at Kimberly with his items for check out. He said that he really likes our wheeled walker!! He liked it so much, that he went out and bought one just like for use at home.

### **Example from Winding Rivers' 2010 Accessibility Project**

**Westby**—One of the older patrons who is a frequent library user, refers to the grant-enhanced workstation as “his station” because of how much he enjoys using the extra large monitor and the large print keyboard.

The library has had such had so much patron interest in their 22” monitor and the large print, black-on-yellow high contrast keyboards that the library is planning to purchase more of them with local funds.